

Washington Hall
Main Street
Washington
Mason County
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-131

HABS
KY
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WASHINGTON HALL

HABS No. KY-131

Location: Main Street, Washington, Mason County, Kentucky.

Latitude: 38° 36' 57" Longitude: 83°48'32"

Present Owner: C. S. and Ruth Manning.

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: This large brick structure, two stories in front and three stories at the rear, was erected in stages between 1825 and 1845 and was important to the community as a hotel, tavern, and meeting hall. The building remains important as a regional example of early 19th century commercial architecture. In contrast to Washington Hall, the steel corn crib was assembled circa 1919.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1825-1845. In 1825, there was a disastrous fire in Washington, which destroyed a "large stone house" on the site of the present building. The front (east) section of the building probably dates after the fire. Investigation of the structure by HABS team members has established that the essentially U-shaped brick portion of the building was erected in at least two stages. Investigation of the foundation has determined that the southern portion beneath the front section was probably the foundation of the "large stone house." The foundation was evidently enlarged when the front section was built after the fire of 1825. Horizontal roof boards are present on the rear rafters of the front section of the building beneath the junction of the roofs of the brick wings with that of the front section. These planks, as well as the presence of old wooden cornice and wooden roofing shingles on the front portion of the building beneath the roofs of the wings, indicate that these rear brick wings were not erected at the same time as the front section. Foundation treatments differ, as do window well treatments, and the wings are not of uniform length. They are not joined symmetrically, or structurally, in the same manner to the front section of the building. This would indicate, therefore, a difference in construction dates, although the fireplaces in these rear wings are identical. Window treatments in the north elevation of the building indicate that the four windows in the

north end of the front section were cut into the wall when the north wing was added. They have the same dimensions as the lower windows of the north wing. They do not match any other windows in the building, including those on the main facade, and there are no windows in the south end of the front section. The construction of Washington Hall spans approximately two decades, 1825-1845.

2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a complete chain of title to the property on which Washington Hall is located.

WASHINGTON HALL (in-lot 41)
Reference: Mason County Atlas, 1876

Deed Book B-1,	P,252 --- May 21, 1795 --- Trustees to George Lewis --- In-lots 41 and 42.
Deed Book N,	P. 44 --- December 9, 1809 --- Trustees to Nathaniel Massie and Marshall Key --- in-lots 41 and 42.
Deed Book L,	P. 206 --- November 29, 1809 --- N. Massie to Marshall Key --- "one equal moiety" of in-lots 41, 42 --- "beginning at north corner on Main of the large stone house now in the possession of John Fristoe" --- lots "formerly in the possession of John Johnston." --- bounded by Canby on south and Lee on the north.
Deed Book M,	P.80 --- April 11, 1811 --- N. Massie to Marshall Key --- "one equal moiety" of in-lots 41, 42 --- "being the lots now in possession of John Fristoe." (Reference: deed November 29, 1809 --- Massie conveyed other moiety to Key).
Deed Book V,	P. 333 --- March 4, 1820 --- Mary Lewis (widow to George Lewis) to Marshall Key. Sale (\$200.00) of dower rights in part of "large stone house and the lots 41 and 42" --- conveyed to N. Massie by G. Lewis, by Massie to Marshall Key.
Deed Book 51,	P, 246 --- April 28, 1842 --- Marshall Key to Peter Lee --- (4,505.00) --- "whereon the stockholders of the Mason House have erected a large tavern house" --- lot "beginning 25 feet north of bank house now occupied by Thomas Mountjoy as a tavern" --- "alley (16') between

said lot and lot of Henry Lee" --- "to be held and used by the said Peter Lee and his heirs and assigns as a public tavern".

(Reference: Deed Book 81, P. 135) Deed mentions sale in January, 1874 of property to Wood and Durrett --- no record of said transaction. --- April 30, 1877 --- Commissioner's Sale to Wood and Durrett.

Deed Book 81, P. 131 --- April 30, 1877 --- George Wood and W. H. Durrett to Charles L. Anderson --- "two story brick Hotel" --- Former owner: Peter Lee --- willed to Eliza Lewis Lee and Rebecca Dobyns --- sold to Commissioner's Sale in case of Charles Anderson et al against R. H. Lee et al, Mason County Circuit Court (no date).

Deed Book 93, P. 22 --- Charles L. Anderson to William J. Bracken --- March 2, 1891.

Deed Book 103, P. 208 --- March 27, 1902 --- Bridget Bracken (widow of W. J. Bracken) to George M. Allen.

Deed Book 105, P. 296 --- February 23, 1904 --- George M. Allen to Patrick Maher (\$2,162.50).

Deed Book 143, P. 511 --- August 26, 1946 --- Thomas Maher to Dan Maher --- Reference: Mason County Will Book 3, P. 592, and Circuit Court Action No. 3138.

Deed Book 192, P. 221 --- April 5, 1974 --- James A. Hines et al (estate of Dan Maher) to C. S. and Ruth Manning --- known as the "Cutter property - or the old hotel lot."
N. B. No record located as to ownership of person named Cutter.

4. Original plans and construction: As discussed in section 1, Washington Hall was constructed in at least two stages. In a deed dated 1877, the property is described as a "two-story brick hotel".
5. Alterations and additions: Four windows of identical size, two on each floor, were installed in the north end wall of the original section. They are determined to be later additions, since the south end wall of the same section was originally built with a full wall. Portions of the rear walls of the brick wings were sheathed in clapboarding circa 1900. The building was in use as a hotel for many years and has evidently been altered to meet changing demands. Spaces in the rear wings were partitioned into small rooms for use as hotel rooms. These partitions have

since been removed. Interiors in the original section appear to be relatively unchanged except for the removal of a wall and chimney to connect the original section with the north wing on the first floor level. A large chamber on the second floor of the original section has been divided near the north end of a non-structural wall.

As previously noted in section 1, the two brick wings adjoined to the rear wall of the original section are probably additions. It is known that the wings sported three-story galleries which faced each other within a narrow courtyard. These galleries were erected circa 1835-40, and were converted into interior hallways circa 1900. The original window and door openings of the galleries were filled-in to create these hallways.

- B. Historical Context: The property was owned for many years by Marshall Key, a prominent landowner. He and other property owners played important roles in the Mason House Corporation, which local tradition states that they were involved in an attempt to retain the county seat at Washington by erecting a hotel building circa 1840. However, no record of the Mason House Corporation, except its mention in the 1842 deed, which stated that "the stockholders of Mason House have erected a large tavern house", substantiates this involvement. The county seat was moved to Maysville in 1848, and it is fairly certain that the building was never a thriving hostelry. After the hotel closed, the building has seen action as a tavern, grocery store and town hall.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building, in simple Federal style, was one of the masonry buildings built in Washington in the early part of the 19th century, when brick was the most popular and widely used building material.
2. Condition of Fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The structure measures 60'-8" x 63'-2", with six bays on the front facade and seven bays on the north facade. It is three stories high, including the basement. The structure was originally U-shaped; the inside of the U space has been filled-in.
2. Foundations: The foundations are limestone masonry throughout.

3. Walls: The major walls are of brick. The entire structure, including the clapboard siding, which appears between the two rear brick wings, are covered with grey paint.
4. Structural system, framing: Brick bearing walls support joists throughout the structure. Infill wood joists support floors between the rear brick wings.
5. Porch, sidewalk: A simple corrugated shed porch roof extends forty feet along the front elevation. The building is undergoing renovation and the roof is scheduled to be removed. A concrete sidewalk extends the full length of the front facade; underneath it is the original sidewalk.
6. Chimneys: There are five brick chimneys. Two are on the south roof slope of the rear wing, and one on the north roof slope of the other wing. Two simple, straight chimneys appear at each end of the front portion of the structure.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The front elevation at the first floor level has two doors. The door in the left side is a fancy four-panel Victorian door. The main panels have rounded heads. The door is further embellished with chamfered pilasters with semi-circular blocks and a single-light transom. The other door in the right side is less elaborate, having four simple panels and a boarded-up transom. Both doors were added in an early renovation of the front elevation. A rear door in the west elevation of the wing has five horizontal panels. Another rear door on the first floor of the wing has been filled-in with clapboards. The remaining doors in the basement have been permanently shut or covered with clapboards, except for one operable door.
 - b. Windows: All wooden double-hung windows in the front elevation have twelve-over-twelve light sash, except for two larger double-hung two-over-two sash windows which were the result of an early renovation. Most double-hung windows in the rear wings (north and south elevations) have two-over-two light sash. Most windows are the same on each floor. All basement openings have been filled-in. On either gable end of the front part of the structure at the chimney are the two casement windows with two panes. They are in poor shape as some of the glazing is missing.

8. Roof: Three simple gable roofs originally covered the structure. An early renovation (closing-in of galleries between two rear wings) necessitated the conversion of the two rear gables into one large gambrel roof. All roofs are covered with tin sheeting and coated with aluminum paint. A simple box cornice accentuates the roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The entire structure, including the rear wings, has a basement with similar plans of the first and second floors. The basement is entered from a stairway in the rear portion of the structure and leads to a rectangular room with an opening on either side leading to two rooms. To the east are two rooms, which run the entire length of the front portion of the structure. A small hall, with another stairway which is now inaccessible, is entered from a room on the south side of the rear portion. Most of these rooms are unfinished and have dirt floors.
 - b. First floor: Access to interior is gained through any one of the two entry doorways. The left doorway leads to the entry hall with a staircase. The hall leads to a three-room apartment with a bathroom and kitchen, which occupies the south end of the front portion and the south wing. The right doorway leads to the meeting room. The north wing, a former grocery store, is entered from a rear opening in the meeting room. A narrow hall separates the store and the apartment in the rear of the building.
 - c. Second floor: The main staircase leads to a spacious landing on the second floor. Two well-proportioned rooms appear on either side of the landing. The north room in the front portion has been partitioned into two smaller rooms. In the rear, one apartment of three rooms in the south wing, is entered from the long hall. Three interconnecting rooms are entered from the north side of the long hall. One bathroom entered from the long hall serves the entire second floor. Once used as hotel rooms, rooms are being renovated again.
2. Stairways: The single-flight stairway from rear hall to basement and two-flight stairway from rear hall to the second floor are simple. The main stairway from the hall to the second floor in the front building is simple, though elegant as it half-turns at an intermediate landing.

3. Flooring: Generally wide random width wood planks appear throughout the structure, well worn in public rooms. The material is probably pine.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls in the apartments are covered with decorative wallpaper. The two public room walls are painted green. The ceilings are generally painted white.
5. Doorways and doors: All doors are fairly simple, solid core molded panel doors.
6. Trim: Simple repetitive mantel moldings appear where mantels remain.
7. Hardware: Wrought iron fireplace grates appear in some rooms.
8. Mechanical equipment: Most fireplaces have been filled-in and modern individual gas heating units are making use of the existing chimney flues.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The front facade faces approximately 5° South of East (95°).
2. Outbuildings:
 - a. Corncrib: One corncrib of corrugated metal construction reportedly built in 1919 is situated south of Washington Hall on the same property.
 - b. Cistern: A concrete cistern appears just at the rear of this structure. It is not in use.

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PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early View: A photographic view of the building appears in Maysville Independent, January 7, 1966, which shows the building in essentially the same condition as it appears today.

B. Interviews: June 18, 1975. Mr. W. W. Catron (Born 1898), lifelong resident of Washington. He operated a store in Washington Hall for 35 years, and stated in the interview that the building has remained essentially unchanged in his memory. Mr. Catron currently lives next door to Washington Hall.

C. Bibliography :

Deed Books, Mason County, Clerk's Office, Maysville, Kentucky.

Best, Edna Hunter. The Historic Past of Washington, Mason County, Kentucky. Edna Hunter Best, 1944.

Clift, G. Glenn. History of Maysville and Mason County. Lexington, Kentucky: Transylvania Printing Co., Inc., 1936.

Coleman, J. Winston. Historic Kentucky. Lexington, Kentucky: Henry Clay Press, 1968.

Lee, Lucy C. An Historical Sketch of Mason County, Kentucky. Masonic House Journal Press, 1925. Louisville, Kentucky:

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in co-operation with Old Washington, Inc. in the summer of 1975. Under the supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, a documentation of nine structures and one site was produced by Perry Benson (University of Pennsylvania), the project supervisor; Ronald Burch (Cornell University), the project historian; Mark Hall (Pennsylvania State University), Kenneth Payson (Cornell University), William F. Petell (Syracuse University) and Steven Shapiro (University of Maryland), student assistant architects. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written data for preparation of transmittal to the Library of Congress.